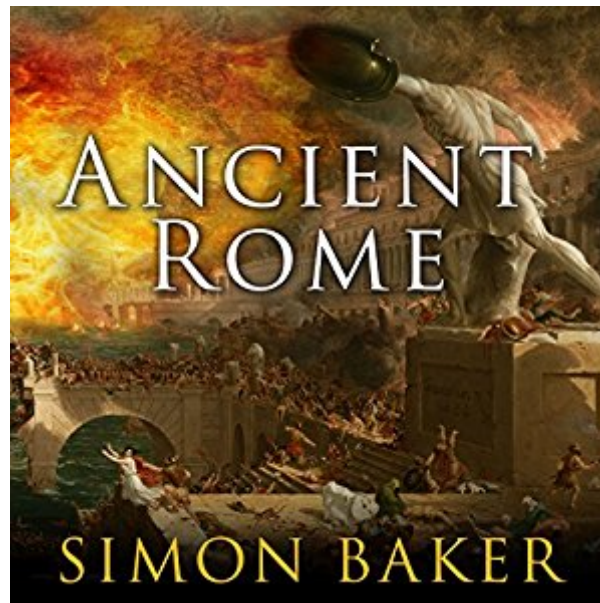


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Ancient Rome: The Rise And Fall Of An Empire



Synopsis

This is the story of the greatest empire the world has ever known. Simon Baker charts the rise and fall of the world's first superpower, focusing on six momentous turning points that shaped Roman history. Welcome to Rome as you've never seen it before - awesome and splendid, gritty and squalid. From the conquest of the Mediterranean beginning in the third century BC to the destruction of the Roman Empire at the hands of barbarian invaders some seven centuries later, we discover the most critical episodes in Roman history: the spectacular collapse of the "free" republic, the birth of the age of the "Caesars", the violent suppression of the strongest rebellion against Roman power, and the bloody civil war that launched Christianity as a world religion. At the heart of this account are the dynamic, complex, and flawed characters of some of the most powerful rulers in history: men such as Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Nero, and Constantine. Putting flesh on the bones of these distant, legendary figures, Baker looks beyond the dusty, toga-clad caricatures and explores their real motivations and ambitions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Good book for my first on Roman Empire history. We are going to Italy this fall and I wanted some appreciation of the Roman Empire. I have done a lot of reading on Greek history but not so much on the history of the Romans. I think I will try and buy the companion DVD series others have mentioned. The book concentrates on approximately 7 turning points in Roman history and the personalities who mattered the most. I think the chapter I enjoyed the most was the one on the Jewish rebellion. With this as a background I think I'm ready to tackle works of Josephus. I think you

will enjoy this book, if you are like me and a relative novice on Roman history, give it a try.

The Roman Empire is clearly a giant topic but Simon Baker's book makes it "consumable" by those with a casual interest in some context for a visit to Rome or understanding other history relative to the Empire. The book is set up, aligned with the BBC series, in a series of "stories" within the Roman Empire's history. These stories allow the book to cover the political changes, the philosophical outlooks, and the territory controlled during almost a thousand years. Completing the book on the plane flight to Rome, I found I had context during my visit for what I was seeing. The Tiber was more than a river, the Palatine Hill more than a ruin. The book also gives context for the various histories of the Christian Church. Not a short read, but reasonable for the subject, the book is written for normal people and I enjoyed it throughout.

An amazing piece of work on part of the author. The breadth of the subject covered within a short span of 420 pages is nothing short of spectacular. The book reads like a fiction novel. At many places it reminded me of the Game of Throne series of books and I am quite sure much of that series is inspired by Rome's true events. What has survived Rome to this day is truly remarkable - the Formula One car race tracks (now cars instead of chariots) are inspired from Rome, as are the Baseball and football events in their massive stadiums. The Voting system, the religious tolerance, senators, counselors, the idea of a republic, the certification and establishment of Christianity as a formal and widely accepted religion of the masses, the architectural layout of cities, and more. The Roman history, as is history of most great empires of that time (Greeks, Mongols, Mughals, etc) is full of blood, gore, treachery, deceit, and politics. It can feel quite depressing actually. The rule of Emperor Nero is mind boggling - killing countless people for money, murdering one's own mother, draining the kingdom of its riches for personal gain, etc. The Roman history also has many lessons to teach - how it is easy to slip away from Republic to an autocracy if the public and government is not vigilant; how lip service to righteousness does not serve kingdoms; how ruthlessness can bring power and fame but not really happiness or peace of mind; how minor vents can set the stage for major catastrophes and change the course of entire history (Constantinople's victory under the cross, refusal of refuge to barbarians, etc); the implications of surrendering power in hands of the weak or the unwise. I had minimal, if any, knowledge of the Roman history before I started reading this book. Now I feel I can have some conversations at great length with someone who may be more familiar with the subject. Highly recommended to any history buffs, those looking for a great read, or for those who are afraid to read fiction for wasting time but miss the thrill of it :)

I took a class on Ancient Rome over the summer, and I purchased this book because I found my textbook extremely dry and disorganized. I wanted something a little more engaging that would help me glean more from the course materials. I am a History major and absolutely love reading history books (that's pretty much all I read these days). This book provided nice snapshots of Ancient Roman history that really sucked me in and made the events of the time seem real. The writing is very eloquent and descriptive, but it also draws you into the heat of the action. I took my time reading because I wanted to absorb as much information as possible. This is definitely one of my favorite history books, and it gave me a really nice foundation for reading further into the subject of Ancient Rome. I've watched the BBC companion series - and while it's entertaining and useful as a visual - I like the book A LOT better.

Interesting read that follows the Roman empire from its inception until falling apart. The focus is on the long list of rulers over many centuries and was enlightening. It reads as easily as a novel. I would prefer to have more insights into how they ruled their far flung empire. There are many parallels to current events. I would have liked additional insights into the culture and the massive engineering projects across the empire, however that is probably a different book(s). This one focuses on the rulers.

It would be impossible to reduce the long history of the Roman Empire in 400 pages. Simon Baker's excellent book does the next best thing. It focuses on six major events in Rome's history. Some are glorious and praise-worthy; others are not, But the book is written so well that all are interesting, I was amazed how quickly I read the book, wishing there was more, Well done and highly enjoyable!

This book was everything I expected, wanted and even more. An extremely accurate portrayal of the key players who shaped Roman history, their courage, honor, and later on, treachery. Political and tactical nous was born in Rome. This book shows how the empire rose, sustained, and like everything else, eventually fell, but not without a fight. I learned more from this book than all my years browsing the net and the hours spent in history class. Very thorough and presented in great dramatic style so as not to bore you. Highly recommend this one to any person wanting to learn about Roman history and its indelible mark on human history as a whole.

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